

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 9187

E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT REACTION TO NOVEMBER ELECTIONS-FALCAO
STATEMENT

REF: A. BRASILIA 9007

B. BRASILIA 6049 (1973), 358, 1966, 6637

SUMMARY: MINISTER OF JUSTICE FALCAO, WHO IS PRESIDENT
GEISEL'S PRIMARY SPOKESMAN ON INTERNAL POLITICS,
ISSUED A PRESS STATEMENT ON DEC. 4 GIVING THE FIRST
PUBLIC REACTION OF THE GOVERNMENT TO THE NOVEMBER
ELECTIONS. ALTHOUGH IT STRONGLY EMPHASIZES THE
REGIME'S COMMITMENT TO PRESERVATION OF DEMOCRATIC
INSTITUTIONS THE STATEMENTS CONCLUDING HEAVY EMPHASIS
ON MAINTENANCE OF THE REGIME'S SECURITY POSTURE INDI-
CATES THAT IT WAS MEANT AS A WARNING TO POTENTIAL
DISSIDENTS IN THE NEW CONGRESS AS WELL AS A
REASSURANCE TO THE ADMINISTRATION'S CONSERVATIVE
CONSTITUENCY. END SUMMARY

1. ON DECEMBER 4, MINISTER OF JUSTICE FALCAO,
RESPONDING TO PERSISTENT PRESS QUERIES, RELEASED A
WRITTEN STATEMENT ON THE RESULTS OF THE LAST ELECTION.
ASSERTING THAT DEMOCRACY WAS BEING "FRONTALLY
ASSAULTED" IN 1964 BY PERSONS WHO "WERE HUMILIATING
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THE CONGRESS, DEMORALIZING THE VOTE AND DEFAMING

LIBERTY." HE REMINDED HIS READERS THAT "MAY TIMES, THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE PEOPLE DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE PRESENT BECAUSE THEY DO NOT KNOW THE PAST," AND URGED VOTERS, ESPECIALLY THE YOUTH, TO MAKE AN EFFORT TO UNDERSTAND WHAT HAS BEEN DONE "TO PUT BRAZIL ON THE PATH TO GRANDEUR." THE 1964 REVOLUTION, HE CLAIMED, WAS THE SALVATION OF BRAZILIAN DEMOCRACY. ALTHOUGH INNOVATIVE AND REFORM-MINDED, HE CONTINUED, THE 1964 REVOLUTION WAS DEMOCRATIC IN NATURE; IT "TOOK A BASIC, SPONTANEOUS AND FAITHFUL OPTION TO UPHOLD THE HISTORIC ROOTS OF THE NATIONAL POLITICAL TRADITION: THE OPTION OF THE CONGRESS, THE VOTE, AND THE ELECTION, WHICH WERE BEING...DELIBERATELY DESTROYED."

2. THE GEISEL GOVERNMENT, HE CONTINUED, HAD MAINTAINED THIS ORIENTATION, GIVING PRESTIGE TO THE CONGRESS AND ASSURING FREE ELECTIONS. THE ELECTIONS, HE ADMITTED, "WERE NOT, IN PART, FAVORABLE TO THE ARENA PARTY": EVEN SO, "THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF THE REGIME REMAINS UNDAMAGED . . ." THE LEGISLATURE, HE BELIEVED, WOULD "CERTAINLY CONTINUE THE NORMAL INTERPLAY OF LEGITIMATE AND DEMOCRATIC PARLIAMENTARY CONFRONTATION." IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S DUTY, HOWEVER, "TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE REVOLUTIONARY LEGISLATION ITSELF -- BOTH ORDINARY AND EXTRAORDINARY -- REMAINS WHOLE, IN FULL AND ABSOLUTE VALIDITY, PROVIDING THE INDISPENSIBLE JURIDICAL SUPPORT TO PRESERVE . . . THE CLIMATE OF PEACE AND TRANQUILITY WHICH IS THE FIRST STIPULATION FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN BRAZIL . . ." TO EMPHASIZE THIS POINT, FALCAO CONCLUDED BY REFERRING TO PASSAGES SUPPORTING THE EXTRAORDINARY "INSTITUTIONAL ACTS" IN EACH OF THE FOUR MAJOR GEISEL SPEECHES TO DATE (REFTELS B).

4 COMMENT: WE JUDGE THE FACAO'S REFERENCE TO THE NEED FOR PEOPLE "TO KNOW THE PAST" INDICATES THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WAS STUNG BY THE APPARENTLY MASSIVE SUPPORT GIVEN TO OPPOSITON MDB CANDIDATES BY YOUNG VOTERS, AND BY THE FAILURE OF THE APPEAL OF THE ARENA PARTY, AND BY EXTENSION, OF THE REVOLUTIONARY

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DOCTRINES REPRESENTED BY THE PARTY, TO THE NATION'S YOUTH. ALTHOUGH THE STATEMENT GIVES STRONG EMPHASIS TO THE REGIME'S COMMITMENT TO MAINTAINING DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS IN BRAZIL, THE VERY HEAVY PROMINENCE GIVEN AT ITS CONCLUSION TO THE CONTINUING VALIDITY OF THE EXCEPTIONAL SECURITY POWERS INDICATES THAT THE SPEECH WAS INTENDED AS A WARNING TO POTENTIALLY VOCAL DISSIDENTS IN THE NEW CONGRESS, AND AS A

REASSURING NOTE TO CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS WHO
FEAR ANY WEAKENING OF THE REGIME'S STRONG SECURITY
POSTURE. RESPECTED COLUMNIST CARLOS CASTELLA
BRANCO PROBABLY CORRECTLY JUDGED THE INTENDED
IMPACT OF THE FACLAO STATEMENT IN CLAIMING THAT
THE EARLIER SPEECH OF GEN. TERRA FARIAS (REFTEL)
WAS INTENDED TO GIVE MILITARY REASSURANCE TO THE
CIVILIANS, WHILE THE FALCAO STATEMENT WAS INTENDED
TO REASSURE THE MILITARY.
JOHNSON

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